

ter is quite justified in objecting to amendments being sprung on him.

The PREMIER: On account of the consideration given to this Bill by the Royal Commission, and the complicated nature of the legislation—

The CHAIRMAN: The Premier cannot discuss the Bill, only the amendment.

The PREMIER: The Minister is quite prepared to report progress. The Bill is of such a complicated nature that each amendment has to be considered in its relationship to the many clauses in it. The Government is not anxious to push the measure through. This is the most important legislation on this subject that has been introduced for many years and the Government wishes every consideration given to it. I appeal to members to go through the Bill carefully and to put their amendments on the notice paper. They can be considered, too, by the Parliamentary draftsman, and we will eventually get a Bill satisfactory to all.

The Minister for Justice: I agree to progress being reported.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 9.38 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 10th September, 1941.

	PAGE
Questions: Taxation	526
Petrol, as to flat rate	528
Papers: Geraldton-Moonyoonooka bus service	528
Bills: Government Stock Saleyards, 1R.	528
Mental Treatment (War Service Patients), 1R.	528
Weights and Measures Act Amendment, 3R.	528
Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Act Amendment, 2R., Com. report	528
State Transport Co-ordination Act Amendment, 2R.	530
Baptist Union of Western Australia Lands, 2R., Com. report	531
Reserves (No. 1), 2R.	532
Profit-sharing Prevention Act Amendment, 2R.	533
Abattoirs Act Amendment, 2R.	534
Native Administration Act Amendment, 2R., Com. report	535

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—TAXATION.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER asked the Chief Secretary: Will the Minister lay on the Table a return similar to that used in his recent speech on the Address-in-Reply (page 248 of 1941 "Hansard") showing the difference in taxes payable on incomes for the years ended the 30th June, 1940, and the 30th June, 1941, by the following taxpayers:—

1, Single persons without dependants on a weekly wage of—(a) £4, (b) £6, (c) £8, (d) £10, (e) £12?

2, Married taxpayers without children—(a) £4, (b) £6, (c) £8, (d) £10, (e) £12?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: Yes.

QUESTION—PETROL.

As to Flat Rate.

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Has the Government given consideration to requesting the Price Fixing Commissioner to fix a flat rate charge for petrol throughout the State? 2, If not, will it take steps to ensure a flat charge, and if necessary request the Federal Government to proclaim such charge under the National Security Act?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, The price of petrol in Australia is controlled by the Commonwealth Commissioner of Prices. 2, The suggestion made by the hon. member will be brought before the notice of the Commonwealth Government.

PAPERS—GERALDTON-MOONYOONOOKA BUS SERVICE.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [4.35]: I move—

That all papers in connection with the granting of the sole right to Mr. D. M. McVea, of Geraldton, to conduct a bus service between Geraldton and the Air Force training school at Moonyoonooka be laid on the Table of the House.

It will not be necessary for me to delay the House very long in order to secure the assent of a majority of members to my motion. At the outset I shall read a letter from Mr. H. V. Waldeck, of Mullewa, which I received recently—

Further to my communications regarding the bus service from Geraldton to the aerodrome, I am still very dissatisfied with the replies I have had from the Transport Board.

The latest is that applications were dealt with in Melbourne, which I know is untrue. I am at a loss to know why men in such positions as manager of the Transport Board should have to write such untruths.

I would be very grateful indeed if you would bring my case before Parliament in due course as I fail to see why every person should not receive a fair and square deal.

After all is said and done, we are supposed to be fighting for democracy, and why not practise it?

Once again thanking you for the justice you have tried to get for me.

Mr. Waldeck has also furnished me with certain particulars from which it appears that on the 10th January he telephoned to the office of the Transport Board inquiring about the Geraldton-Moonyoonooka bus service, and was informed that at that date no application had been lodged. As he desired to secure further particulars, he visited Perth and on the 14th January called at the Transport Board's office where he was told that one application had been received but that it would not be dealt with for some time. On the next day he lodged his application personally at the board's office. The next he heard of the matter was a casual intimation on the 28th January that a license for the sole right to conduct the bus service had been granted by the board to Mr. McVea.

Members may not appreciate just what a valuable concession is involved in this particular service. Knowing the Chairman of the Transport Board as I do, I do not think for one moment he would be guilty of anything not strictly honourable. I also know the two other members of the board and I apply to them the same remark. I impute no motives to anyone concerning this matter. As for Mr. McVea, I have nothing to say against him. He is one of the finest residents we have in Geraldton. About three weeks ago I met him outside the G.P.O. He asked me what I had against him. I told him I had nothing at all against him. He then informed me that he had heard that I was taking certain action regarding his securing the license for the bus service. I told Mr. McVea that I intended to find out why a present of the bus service had been made to him, and I intended to do so because I had been asked to take action by others. My impression is that members generally do not support the idea of making a present of a public utility to any individual. Because of my belief I have moved the

motion standing in my name, so that I and other members may ascertain whether statements made to me that other people were not given an opportunity to tender for the bus service were, in fact, correct.

Members generally will be aware that from time to time advertisements appear in the "West Australian" through which the Transport Board calls for applications or tenders for the running of what are known as school bus services. I have one such which is typical of the advertisements. The advertisement is headed with the name of the State Transport Co-ordination Act, 1933-40, and refers to the Wiluna-Red Hill-Lakeside omnibus service. The route is set out and various other particulars are stated, but I need not specify all the details. As far as I and other interested people, including Mr. Waldeck, are aware, no such advertisement was published in connection with the Geraldton-Moonyoonooka bus service.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: What other particulars were included in the advertisement to which you referred?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The advertisement proceeds—

Tenders are invited by the Western Australian Transport Board for the conduct of the Wiluna-Red Hill-Lakeside Omnibus Service as from the 1st July, 1941.

Mr. McVea, during the course of the conversation which we had, and which was in no way confidential, told me that this is so lucrative a business that he made the journey to Perth and had a very fine bus built. That one was not sufficient, and he put on a second bus. He also told me that he had been scouring the country for a third bus—as far as Albany—but unsuccessfully, and that therefore he had placed an order in Perth for the construction of another.

The position as regards this service appears strange to me. On the taxi service in Geraldton there are six or eight men. One of them is a returned soldier who has lost a leg. The only preference that the whole of the people of Australia stand for is that accorded to returned soldiers. Mr. Pomeroy, the returned soldier in question, tells me that he was never given any chance even to tender for the service—let alone being given preference. I submit that unquestionably everyone should be given a chance to tender through the publication of advertisements in the Press. Further, the State Transport Board was specially created to remove these

matters from political control. Apparently in this instance a very serious mistake has been made, a mistake which I hope will not be repeated.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Government Stock Saleyards.
- 2, Mental Treatment (War Service Patients).

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—WEIGHTS AND MEASURES ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Assembly.

BILL—METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [4.49]: A perusal of this Bill has left me somewhat puzzled. In my experience, the method suggested in this measure has never previously been exploited. In fact, I have here a notice showing what is the set-out of the Bill. If the measure is needed to put something in order, it must be done. The question relates to Subiaco. From the 1st July to the 31st August, 1936, the rates were—water 1s. 8d., sewerage 1s. 3d., drainage 5d.—total 3s. 4d. From the 1st September, 1936—after improvements had been made—to the 30th June, 1937, the rates were—water £2, sewerage £1 6s. 8d., drainage 11s. 1d.—total £3 7s. 9d. Apparently what the Bill proposes to enable the Department to do has already been done. I would like the Chief Secretary to obtain information from the Department and inform the House whether that has been the practice and whether the Bill is therefore merely a measure to put the matter in order.

Another point is this: An assessment notice is sent out in respect of a certain property. Within a few months improvements are made on that property by the erection of a building costing £8,000 or £9,000. The building, however, is only half

completed so that there is an increase in value of the property amounting to about £4,000. But no revenue could be earned from the additional property for a period of from 18 months to two years. The question arises whether the Department would apply the provisions of Clause 4 to a property of that kind. It must be readily admitted that the Department is put to some expense in connection with the erection of such buildings because water must be laid on. For that reason there seems to be some justification for the measure. I am not speaking derogatory of the Bill but would like elucidated the two points to which I have referred. Increases in the value of properties are likely to be far greater than decreases. However, that is by the way. I am quite prepared to support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [4.53]: Unlike the previous speaker I cannot say that I am enamoured of this little Bill from the point of view of justice or principle. A man may own a block of land on which he has paid rates and taxes for a number of years without having received any return for that payment. Water rates, sewerage rates and ordinary rates have to be paid on such a property. If it is fair and just that a man should have to pay rates and taxes upon a block of land that is earning nothing, it seems reasonable to suggest that when he proceeds to build upon that block the rates he has been paying should remain in force until the annual assessment. That has been the accepted principle to date. I know the Minister will reply that amendments have been made to the Municipal Corporations Act and the Road Districts Act enabling the municipalities and road boards to vary their rating in the manner suggested in the Bill. But let us consider the case quoted by Mr. Baxter. Here is a property the rate on which was previously 3s. 4d. and because building operations were commenced on it the rate jumped up to £3 7s. 9d. Probably the man owning that block had been waiting for a long time to secure sufficient money to pay a deposit and continue financing the erection of the building. I am not too keen to give the Government the right to alter valuations during a year, because it has been the accepted principle for many years that rates and taxes must be paid on unimproved

land. The fact must be taken into consideration that at present people desiring to build must do so at a peak period when it is very difficult to get what might be described as a reasonable price for land. At this stage, in view of the heavy taxation that the Government imposed last year on owners of property and the much heavier burden imposed by the Federal Government, it would be reasonable to allow the present system to continue, at least until after the war.

It can be admitted that provision is made in the Bill that if a building is demolished a man's rates may be reduced, but in order to obtain a reduction he must lodge an appeal. A reduction cannot be automatically effected. This appears to be a one-way traffic Bill from the point of view of the Government. My opinion is that we should do as much as possible at present to keep costs down instead of automatically increasing them. Perhaps the Minister, when replying to the debate, may be able to tell us how much the department anticipates losing from a reduction of values through buildings being demolished and what the estimated increased revenue is likely to be from properties that are improved.

Hon. G. Fraser: A matter of a few thousand pounds a year I should think.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Men who have been paying rates and taxes on unimproved land should be given some consideration when they decide to build. I have some land I would willingly give away. I cannot get anybody to buy it, but I still have to pay rates and taxes upon it. Although I have paid rates and taxes on portion of that property for 26 years, and have received no service in return for that payment, immediately I decided to erect a building on it the rates would be increased under this measure. It would be preferable if this Bill were not introduced at this stage. We should endeavour to keep down rates rather than increase them.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West—in reply [5.1]: The position is quite clear. Under the Municipal Corporations Act there is provision to alter assessments during the year, but under the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act that power is not given. Although it may be true that assessments

have been sent out from time to time in cases of this kind, there has been no power—so I am informed—to enforce payment on such higher assessments.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The department collects the money.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That may be so, and it is only fair that it should collect the money. I cannot understand the peculiar reasoning of Mr. Thomson. Let me take the case he quoted, that of a person having a block of land upon which he had paid the minimum water rates for many years, and had then decided to put up a block of flats valued at, say, £10,000. Is the hon. member going to suggest that that area of land should be serviced with water by the department, and that the owner should pay only the minimum rate applicable to a block of vacant land?

Hon. A. Thomson: He should have to pay for excess water.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am not talking about excess water, but about a water supply. A service is rendered by the department, and the owner of the premises is only paying for what is supplied to him. According to the water rates he pays, so is he supplied with a given quantity of water. I cannot understand the reasoning of the hon. member who says that the owner in question should be entitled for nine or ten months to be exempt from the payment for water supplied in such circumstances. Were the reverse the case, and had the department said that until the end of the rating year it was not going to supply those flats with water, the owner would quickly come to heel or create an agitation. The reasoning of the hon. member on that point is fallacious.

With regard to the automatic reduction spoken of in the case of premises that have been burnt out, I point out that the Water Supply Department would probably have no knowledge, as a department, of the fact that such premises had been burnt out or demolished. It always has knowledge of new buildings because an application has to be made to it for a permit in the first place, and consequently it is feasible for any alteration to be made automatically in such a case. When the premises are pulled down or burnt down, unless the owner notifies the department and appeals for a reduction in water rates, he cannot expect the department to act. I do not see that there is any

real ground for opposition to the Bill on the statements made by Mr. Thomson. The measure is essentially a fair one. The department is entitled to be paid for water supplied to buildings in circumstances such as those referred to. I trust that the view taken by Mr. Thomson is not that of members generally.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You are not asking for more power to be given to the department than is already held by municipal councils?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No. We are only asking for the same power as is enjoyed by municipalities and road boards in regard to the assessment of rates on any property.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—STATE TRANSPORT CO-ORDINATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [5.6] in moving the second reading said: The proposal in the Bill is to amend Section 3 of the State Transport Co-ordination Act by altering the definition of the word "vehicle" for the purpose of exempting from the provisions of the Act omnibuses which are operated by the Commissioner of Railways. The definition of "vehicle" under the Act is as follows:

"Vehicle" means a vehicle propelled by means other than animal or human power, and the term includes aircraft, but does not include a vehicle on a railway whether used on a Government or privately-owned railway or tramway, or trolley bus operating on behalf of the Crown.

Thus, all vehicles used by the Government or by a privately-owned railway or tramway undertakings, including trolley buses operated by the Commissioner of Railways, are exempt from the provisions of the Act. The proposal in the Bill is to insert in the definition of "vehicle" after the words "trolley bus" the words "or an omnibus" and thereby bring Government-owned omnibuses into line with all other vehicles under State control.

The Bill does not remove these buses from the jurisdiction of the Traffic Act, and the regulations thereunder will have to be complied with in all respects. Omnibus services are at present being carried on by the Commissioner of Railways between East Perth and Wembley-Floreat Park, and also along Stirling-highway between Perth and Swanbourne. Orders have been placed for additional buses, but the exigencies of war are delaying their fulfilment. If this exemption were not granted, it would mean that the Commissioner of Railways would have to apply to the Transport Board for licenses to operate, submit time-tables and fares and other particulars. The intention was to provide trolley buses on the route I have mentioned. Owing to the difficulty of securing the necessary chassis, the Railway Department was forced into the position of having to provide some additional means of conveyance, and that was the original reason for the provision of the buses. There is no desire to enter into competition with privately-owned buses, as the idea behind the new services is to augment existing runs for which the Crown is responsible.

Hon. G. W. Miles: What if the Government decides to start a run of omnibuses on other routes?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Government may decide to do that.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It would then be competing with private enterprise.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Not necessarily! There is a constant agitation for increased transport facilities where the Government is already providing transport in the form of trams. I think most members agree that any extension of tram routes should be frowned upon if it is possible to get the more up-to-date method of transport by trolley-bus. There is extreme difficulty in obtaining vehicles of any description at present. The hon. member may rest assured there is no intention on the part of the Government to provide new routes particularly by means of other buses when it is not able to obtain any.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Not today, but some other day.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Some other Government may determine to do that.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Is the Government running special trips in competition with private companies?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: Not that I know of.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: I read about a bus accident at Bunbury on the occasion of a special trip that was being made by one of the Government buses.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member may know of tramway buses being used for special purposes. I suppose that is done, and probably the department would be blamed if it were not done.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: I read of an accident having occurred, and I thought the Minister might know something about it.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member may be referring to an accident to a bus propelled by producer gas.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Yes.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not know anything of the circumstances.

Hon. W. J. Mann: It only toppled over.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: The Bill is a simple one and easily understood. I hope members will endorse the proposal and enable the required exemption to be applicable to State-owned buses in the same way as it applies to the Midland railway, the Government railways, the Government tramways and trolley buses. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [5.13]: The Bill is a simple one, but it introduces a principle to which up to the present the House has set itself in opposition. I ask the Chief Secretary whether it is intended that these buses shall be brought under the same regulations that apply in the case of private bus companies that desire to undertake a service in the metropolitan area. I refer to the necessity for making application to the State Transport Co-ordination Board.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The very reverse!

Hon. H. SEDDON: Transport companies have to apply for permission to institute a service. Tenders are then called, and the board subsequently carries out its functions in so far as it endeavours to provide such service at a figure which is subject to public competition. It appears to me that under this amendment the Government will be able to place its omnibuses outside those restrictions.

Hon. G. Fraser: You would not give power to a Government board to overrule the Government!

Hon. H. SEDDON: I think the distinct purpose of the Transport Board was to ensure that any transport facilities instituted after its establishment should be subject to the control of the board and should have regard to the principle of service to the public rather than advantage to a public transport service. From that angle I see some objection to the Bill. The Transport Board has carried out its duties in many districts to the great advantage of the general public. We have at least one service that has been instituted under the authority of the board and is being carried on more cheaply than the service which the Government railways provided. To that extent the board has prevented any attempt to increase unduly the rates for the transport of goods.

If the House agrees that the Government may institute a fleet of omnibuses and services within the metropolitan area or in any other area, this principle should be observed. If the Government intends to enter the field, it should compete upon the same conditions as any other party instituting such a service would have to observe. There is a field that the Government might explore, namely, in the country districts. When it comes to a matter of efficient transport, many of our country areas are suffering at present from the fact that, though they have the railway system operating, any chance of getting rapid and efficient transport is out of the question. Had the Minister put forward a proposal for arranging improved services for country districts, his Bill would have received more favourable consideration than is likely to be meted out to this measure. In the circumstances I feel that as the Bill will really authorise an extension of the principle of State trading, the House should view it with great caution. At the moment I am inclined rather to vote against the Bill than to support it.

On motion by Hon. A. Thomson, debate adjourned.

BILL—BAPTIST UNION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA LANDS.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [5.19] in moving the second reading said: This is a small Bill which I am sure will meet with the approval of the House. Its purpose is to enable the Baptist

Union of Western Australia to deal with any land, granted or demised to that body by the Crown or otherwise acquired, by way of sale, mortgage or lease. In 1901 the Baptist Union was granted a half-acre block of land in South Perth for church purposes. Since then the church has acquired a more suitable site and has built thereon. Upon representations being made to the Crown for permission to sell the original site freed from any trust, it was found that legislative authority would first be required. This Bill will enable the church to sell the block acquired from the Crown and to deal with similar cases that may arise from time to time.

The Bill sets out, subject to a proviso, that no transfer or mortgage, and no lease for a term exceeding 21 years of land granted by the Crown without pecuniary consideration therefor, shall be valid unless countersigned as approved by the Governor. Legislation of a similar nature is already on the statute-book enabling the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church, the Presbyterian Church and the Hebrew Congregation to sell and deal in a like manner with lands granted to them by the Crown. The Bill simply seeks to bestow upon the Baptist Church power similar to that already enjoyed by other denominations. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—RESERVES (No. 1).

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [5.24] in moving the second reading said: This Bill deals with a reserved area of land adjacent to Anzac House with frontages to St. George's-terrace and Irwin-street, Perth, and the proposals are briefly as follows:—

(1) To exclude from the reserve a strip of land 10 feet wide along Irwin-street from St. George's-terrace to Hay-street, together with truncations at each corner, for the purpose of widening Irwin-street.

(2) To close a right-of-way on the east side of Anzac House.

(3) To exclude from the reserve an area of land between Anzac House and the proposed new alignment of Irwin-street, and grant it to the Returned Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia, W.A. Branch Incorporated, the area to be granted in fee simple comprising 35 8/10ths perches.

The whole of this reserved land is covered by the Public Buildings Act, 1937, by which leasing arrangements may be entered into by a committee appointed by the Governor and by which authority was granted to apply the proceeds to the erection of central public buildings for the use of the Government. Therefore, to do what is proposed by this Bill requires the approval of Parliament.

In 1933, the R.S.L. was granted the area on which its premises are now built, the present structure representing the maximum number of storeys which the foundations can safely hold. This information is based on the advice of architects. Owing to the fact that the accommodation in the league's premises is severely taxed and it is not possible to house some of its affiliated activities, and also that with the return of thousands of men of the oversea forces the league's activities must materially increase, that body has found it necessary to seek the assistance of the Government in providing additional land to erect further building accommodation.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: What is the depth of the block?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is shown on the plan I have tabled.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Does it go through to Hay-street?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No. The hon. member will find from the plan that the boundary will be the same as that of Anzac House. The request has been fully investigated and considered by the Government. The land is not required for Government buildings, suitable arrangements for this purpose having been made by excising a portion of Government House Domain on the opposite side of St. George's-terrace. By granting this land to the R.S.L., any direct personal benefit will accrue not to any individual, but to those returned men of the various arms of our forces who will become the controllers of the destinies of the league in the future. If the position arose that the functions of the R.S.L. did cease and its affairs had to be wound up, the whole of

the organisation's assets would have to be devoted to a patriotic purpose, and in the event of a dispute, would become a matter for settlement before the Chief Justice.

Members will observe, therefore, that the main objective of the Bill is to make a grant of additional land to the R.S.L. and, in seeking to do this, opportunity has been taken to exclude from the reserve a 10-ft. strip along its eastern side fronting on to and along the full length of Irwin-street. This is a wise procedure and necessary, having in mind the comparative narrowness of the existing roadway and the fact that the future erection of Government buildings in the vicinity must necessarily entail greater traffic needs. The narrowness of Irwin-street has also been the subject of comment by the Town Planning Board and the Fire Brigades Board, and I think members will agree that its widening is a step in the right direction.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: That strip would be on the eastern side of the land and on the western side of Irwin-street?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Do you know the present width?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I cannot say off-hand. The other provision in the Bill is for the closure of the 10-ft. right-of-way on the eastern side of Anzac House. This right-of-way, which has been used in connection with the present R.S.L. premises, will no longer be required. The area comprised in it will be included in that proposed to be granted to the league.

I have laid a plan on the Table for the information of members. It shows the boundaries of the existing Reserve B5576, Irwin-street and its proposed widening. It also shows the boundaries of the area, comprising 35 and 8/10ths perches, alongside Anzac House, which area it is proposed to grant in fee simple to the Returned Soldiers' League. Should the Bill commend itself to members, the effect will be to enable the Returned Soldiers' League to provide much-needed additional accommodation to existing premises that are now taxed to the limit. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [5.31]: I am not attempting to oppose the Bill; but I think, in justice to the House, members should have an opportunity to peruse the

plan which the Minister says has been laid on the Table this afternoon. I would ask some member to move the adjournment of the debate.

On motion by Hon. L. B. Bolton, debate adjourned.

BILL—PROFITEERING PREVENTION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [5.33] in moving the second reading said: The proposal in this Bill is to enable a prosecution to be launched for an offence under the Profiteering Prevention Act within a period of six months after the Price Fixing Commissioner has completed the necessary investigation. The Act provides that a prosecution shall be launched within six months from the time when an offence takes place, and this provision has to some extent enabled profiteers to escape prosecution. The Act has now been in force for approximately two years, during which period practical experience has proved that the time allowed within which to take legal proceedings is not sufficient in many cases to enable the Commissioner to carry out due and proper inquiries.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Must proceedings be taken within six months of the date of an offence?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. Those who set themselves out to transgress this law endeavour by all the means in their power to cover up every act of profiteering they commit, and consequently it is a difficult proposition to obtain the necessary evidence. It is not sufficient to have information of an offence; it is necessary to obtain evidence, and this, members will agree, is in some cases exceedingly difficult to obtain.

The policing of this type of legislation is expected by the public to be done entirely by Government officials. When an apparent offence has been discovered, investigations prove to be more often than not most complicated and difficult. Many avenues have to be explored and much detailed examination has to be made into alleged offences before sufficient evidence

of profiteering is obtained. On several occasions it has been found that by the time the investigations had been completed, no prosecution could be instituted for the reason that Section 28 of the Profiteering Prevention Act provides that offenders may be prosecuted and punished by complaint under the Justices Act. It must be borne in mind, too, that the inquiries to be made by the Price Fixing Commissioner almost invariably include investigation beyond the limits of this State. In such circumstances, therefore, guilty persons are assisted to escape a prosecution; and no member would desire any profiteer, be he trader or otherwise, to escape the consequences of his action, at the same time retaining any illegal excess profit purely on account of the difficulty associated with the investigation of the offence. The other amendment in the Bill is necessary to rectify an error in the drafting of the principal Act.

Members will no doubt agree that the purpose of the measure is commendable, in that it seeks power to deal adequately with any person or persons guilty of profiteering against their fellow-men in these most difficult times. Generally, the Act has been reasonably effective in controlling illegal practices in war time. It can be said, too, that the legislation has so far given satisfaction to the people of the State. However, the passing of the Bill will close a serious loophole through which some profiteers have been escaping their just deserts, and will no doubt prove to be a deterrent to those who may perhaps be tempted to seek excess profits to which they are not entitled. I move —

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [5.38]: I am inclined to think, although I may be wrong, that the Bill will conflict with the parent Act, which can remain in force only during the period of the war and six months thereafter. We are in the position that if we pass the Bill a prosecution may lapse by effluxion of time. I raise that point for consideration.

On motion by Hon. L. Craig, debate adjourned.

BILL—ABATTOIRS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [5.39] in moving the second reading said: This Bill seeks to legalise existing conditions in respect to the slaughtering of stock on premises other than the Government Abattoirs, and provides for power to collect fees for licenses and the inspection of stock slaughtered on such premises. It seeks, too, the necessary authority to enable carcasses slaughtered at the Government Abattoirs to be graded and branded according to grade, so that retail butchers, and particularly consumers, will be protected in purchasing certain types of meat, such as lamb and mutton.

The principal Act was passed in 1909. Under Section 6 power was given to prohibit the slaughter of certain types of stock at places other than the Government Abattoirs. Over a considerable period a number of small private slaughteryards have come into existence where pigs, particularly porkers, are slaughtered for sale by auction at the markets. Regulations were passed which permitted the use of premises for this purpose, the intention being that such premises would be used for the slaughter of the owner's own pigs. These regulations permitted pigs to be slaughtered on private premises in lots of not less than 20, the fees payable being 6d. per pig, with a minimum fee of 10s. Several permits have been granted for this purpose and the trade has increased considerably.

It has been ascertained, however, that legally the granting of licenses is rigid and not permissive, and that there is no legal right to permit the slaughter of stock at any place within the prescribed abattoirs district except at the abattoirs. It is obviously desirable that the Minister should have power to issue licenses for the slaughter of certain types of stock at approved places in the proclaimed district so that the existing practice may be legalised. The Minister should also have power to prevent the abuse of any such permits which may be granted and thus protect the interests of slaughterers at the Government Abattoirs.

It is proposed to amend Section 6 to give these powers to the Minister. It also is proposed to add a section providing for the making of regulations

relating to the grading and branding of carcasses after slaughter to indicate the quality of the meat. This would not interfere in any way with the present inspection carried out by the Health Department, ensuring that meat is fit for consumption but not indicating the quality of the meat.

Representations have been made by the master butchers and by officers of the Price Fixing Commissioner that it would be in the interests of the public for the Minister to have such power, particularly, for instance, in the case of lamb and mutton carcasses.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I think it will only confuse the issue.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not think so. Grading is particularly desirable in the case of lamb and hogget carcasses and can only be carried out at the Government Abattoirs.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The grading is all right when it is done in the butcher's shop.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Such carcasses would be inspected by the abattoirs inspector and branded according to type, such as sucker lamb, lamb, hogget, etc. This would ensure the consumer's receiving the quality of meat for which he is paying. I believe the provision is in existence elsewhere.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It is a good provision.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I believe the Bill, if passed, will benefit not only the consumer but the producer, who must also be considered in matters of this kind. Under existing conditions and early in the season, lambs are scarce and the price is high. The consumer asking for lamb, however, may be supplied—

Hon. J. J. Holmes: With an old ewe.

The CHIEF SECRETARY:—with hogget at lamb price, which meat is a little better than old ewe. The producer, however, only receives the market rate for hogget class meat. The proposals in the Bill are clear, highly desirable, and easily understood. They will not only benefit the consumer, but also the producer. Upon examination I feel sure that members will find no objection to them. The first portion of the Bill deals with legalising conditions. Those that have applied in recent years are fairly satisfactory, and if it is necessary to legalise

the position this House will not stand in the way. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. H. V. Piesse, debate adjourned.

BILL—NATIVE ADMINISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [5.47] in moving the second reading said: This is a very important measure which seeks to impose restrictions for the control of natives with a view to preventing the spread of leprosy from the Kimberley district where the disease exists to some extent amongst the natives of that area. The provisions of the Bill apply particularly to the district mentioned, and the proposal is that any native desiring to travel south of the 20th parallel of south latitude or any such other boundary as may from time to time be declared by the Governor, must first of all obtain a permit to do so.

Hon. L. Craig: From whom, the Commissioner?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Commissioner of Native Affairs. In recent years the Government has given careful attention to the leprosy position in the North. An intensive inspection for the detection of cases has been carried on by two medical officers, Dr. Davis and Dr. Musso, and unfortunately many cases have been discovered and the natives brought in for treatment. The original suggestion for some controlling legislation as embodied in the Bill, came from Dr. Davis, who will be remembered as the medical officer appointed by the Department of Native Affairs to inspect the aborigines, particularly in regard to the incidence of leprosy, in the far North. Very good work has been accomplished by the doctors in grappling with the disease, and whilst there is some comfort in the knowledge that natives are under treatment, and that with treatment some of them have been discharged as cured, it is necessary to press on with the thoroughness of inspection. Experience has shown that the disease is a little more widespread than previously anticipated, and it is now clear that the efforts of our medical officers would be assisted considerably by the control of the movements of natives from leprosy areas to leprosy-free areas.

Leprosy is the most serious medical problem of the Kimberleys, but our medical officers are competently dealing with the matter and have already accomplished much good work of an unheralded nature. In the period from 1921-32, 43 cases at least were known, while from 1933-40, 284 new cases were found. Consequently the position is serious, although not alarming. The modern method of control of this disease is the isolation, as soon as possible, of all cases, together with adequate and frequent examination of all contacts, particularly children.

There are two main types of leprosy, namely, nerve leprosy, and nodular leprosy. Either type may be, or may become, infective. What are described as "open" cases are those in which the germ is being discharged from the body either by the nasal secretion or from the skin, and the patient is an immediate danger to others with whom he lives in close and constant contact. All types are being treated at the Derby Leprosarium. There remains little more to be said about the Bill itself. Its provisions are mostly self-explanatory. The 20th parallel of south latitude is just south of Broome. It is very close to Condon, and just north of Porth Hedland.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It is a good Bill.

Hon. F. R. Welsh: My word!

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: All natives, including exempted persons, are covered by the Bill. If it becomes law they will be unable to travel south beyond the parallel specified, except with a permit signed by the Minister controlling native affairs. Provision has been made for the issue of permits to natives to come south for limited periods to seek special medical or surgical attention. There is also provision for the transfer of mental cases, subject to certain safeguards for their supervision, and for their early return to a place north of the 20th parallel of south latitude. It is also provided that the Minister shall have power to grant a permit to a native person to travel south of the boundary line in connection with any legal action, cause, proceeding, or other legal matter, subject to stipulations for the return of the native. Provided certain conditions are complied with, mainly in regard to medical inspection, permits will be issued for natives to accompany drovers as hitherto. Such conditions already apply to droving parties under Section 9 of the Act, so no additional

inconvenience in this regard will be imposed by the Bill.

It may be said that the prevention of natives from entering or leaving a certain area without special permission is a drastic step to take, but a problem of this nature is one demanding drastic action if we are to have due and proper regard to the health of the white community of this State. In conclusion I submit that all aspects of this legislation have been carefully considered by the Government. Medical opinion is emphatic that if we are to prevent the spread of this dread disease and are to do the right thing by future generations, we must take all the necessary precautions within our power now. That is what the Bill proposes to do, and I trust it will have a speedy passage through this Chamber. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [5.55]: Knowing what I do about the incidence of leprosy in the North, I give this Bill my whole-hearted support. I congratulate the Government upon the manner in which it has handled this question. A few years ago it was a menace and likely to spread. The matter has been properly handled and now when lepers are found they are confined in an up-to-date leprosarium at Derby, where they are properly treated. The purpose of this measure is to confine to an area north of a certain point any native afflicted with leprosy. Power is given to alter that boundary should the necessity arise. A feature that appeals to me is that some years ago when I was dealing with this problem the medical fraternity did not consider any danger attached to it. Now, strange to say, doctors look upon it as a very serious matter. I think the Bill has not been brought down a day too soon. I give it my wholehearted support.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 5.59 p.m.